

SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

Broward Service Center

District updates stakeholders on Everglades restoration

Governing Board member Pamela Brooks-Thomas welcomed more than 60 elected officials, government staff, local water managers, special interests and environmental organizations to a stakeholder update in February on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and *Acceler8* projects and plans in Broward County.

Water Matters celebration teaches conservation and pollution reduction

Close to 2,500 people helped celebrate Water Matters Day 2005 in Broward County by attending 35 different educational exhibits and landscaping workshops designed to teach property owners how to conserve water and reduce stormwater pollution. Besides tasty food, creative activities for kids of all ages, and live entertainment, the April 19 event also provided a fabulous selection of free drought-tolerant plants for everyone who participated in the educational opportunities.

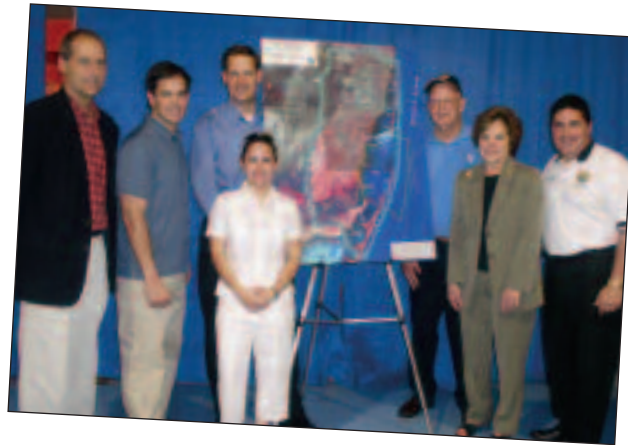
Miami-Dade Service Center

Florida legislators tour Biscayne Bay

Six Florida lawmakers, including the chairman of the State House Appropriations Committee toured environmentally sensitive lands within the Biscayne Bay watershed in April. The tour was part of a briefing and press conference arranged by a coalition of environmental groups and the District to lend support to legislative leaders who are spearheading an effort to secure a \$25 million appropriation for land acquisition to be used within the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project, a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project covers a conceptual boundary of 40,000 acres in southeast Miami-Dade County and was put on the fast track within the District's *Acceler8* program. The project will help restore wetlands and reestablish the historical creek network feeding Biscayne Bay, enhancing the ecological health of the bay and Biscayne National Park. The \$25 million appropriation, if approved this legislative session, will be used to purchase priority environmental lands in imminent threat of development within the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project.



Future water stewards: District Fort Lauderdale Field Station staffer Craig VanAuken makes a wetlands presentation to a kindergarten class at Miami Shores Presbyterian School.



From left, Rep. Dan Gelber, Rep. Marco Rubio, Rep. Joe Negron, SFWMD Governing Board Vice-Chair Irela Bagué, Rep. Richard Machek, Sen. Nan Rich and Rep. Julio Robaina.

Hurricane Season Heads Up

Is your neighborhood ready to drain rain?

We're preparing, are you? Hurricane season begins June 1, and after last year's multiple hurricane slam, do you know if your neighborhood's drainage system is ready to handle heavy rain?

Hurricanes bring rain, and generally lots of it. That's why our region is equipped with an interconnected flood control system of drainage canals that can move millions of gallons of water when storms come calling. Yet flood control is a shared responsibility, and every citizen should get involved.

Look around your neighborhood. It's likely you'll see swales, drainage grates and retention lakes. This is the tertiary system – or third tier – where rainfall drainage begins. Water is carried from here into the secondary system. Secondary canals are maintained by cities, counties and local drainage districts. You may have seen system components such as culverts, gates and weirs in your town.

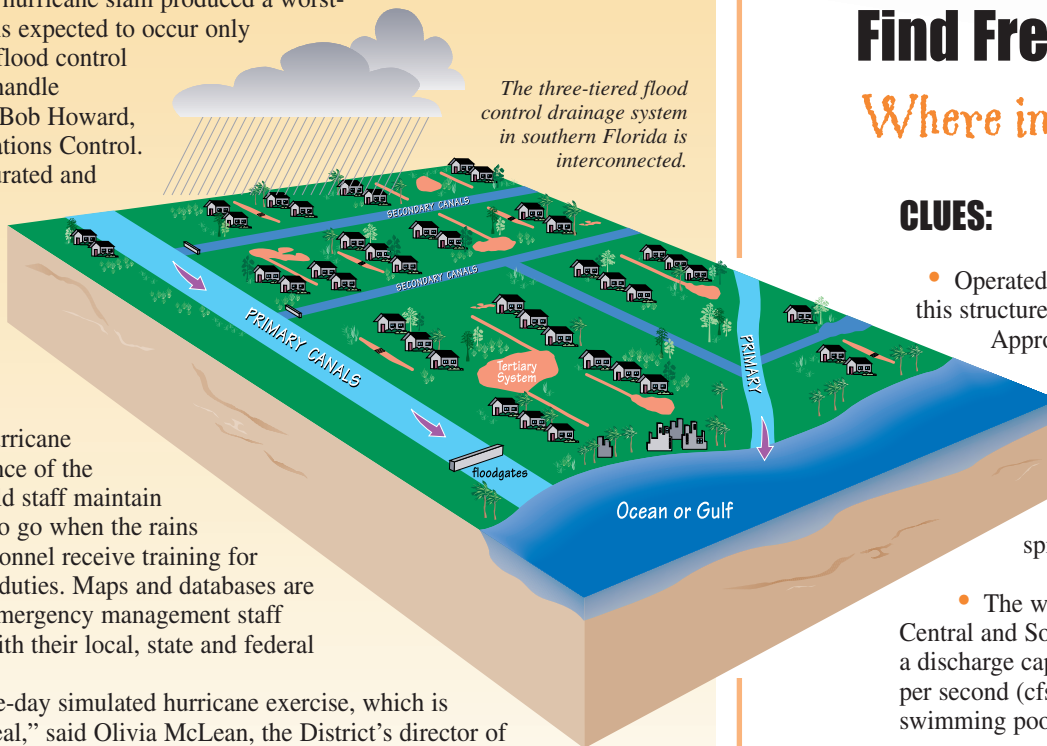
The primary system is the last link for moving excess water from the land. This system is operated and maintained by the South Florida Water Management District, and major canals and pumping facilities are clearly marked with agency signs. For optimum flood control, each system must be free of blockage and connect to the next drainage tier.

Last year's four-hitter hurricane slam produced a worst-case scenario – one that is expected to occur only once in 200 years. "Our flood control system was designed to handle significant storms," said Bob Howard, District director of Operations Control. "We were more than saturated and faced some tough decisions about where to put all that water." Fortunately, blockages were quickly remedied, the system held strong and major canals did not overflow.

The District begins hurricane preparation well in advance of the season. In the winter, field staff maintain pumps so they're ready to go when the rains begin. In the spring, personnel receive training for emergency management duties. Maps and databases are updated. All the while, emergency management staff continue to coordinate with their local, state and federal partners.

"Yearly, we hold a one-day simulated hurricane exercise, which is pretty close to the real deal," said Olivia McLean, the District's director of Emergency and Security Management. Dubbed "Hurricane Freddy," managers and staff mobilize to rehearse preparation, response, mitigation and recovery measures. Emergency management teams from local, county, state and federal agencies also participate in the exercise.

Just like us, you, too, should be preparing. Check your local drainage system and report clogged or damaged facilities. Citizen involvement is essential during hurricane season, and we're counting on you to help us carry out our flood control mission.



Find Freddy!

Where in the District is Freddy?

CLUES:

- Operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this structure is part of the Okeechobee Waterway. Approximately 10,000 vessels lock through annually.
- The first boat lock was built at this site by the Everglades Drainage District in 1925. The Corps built the current lock in 1941 and the connecting spillway was constructed in 1944.
- The water control spillway, a component of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project, has a discharge capacity of approximately 11,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) – enough water to fill 330 backyard swimming pools in one minute!
- Freddy plans to relax and have fun at the adjacent recreation area. He can camp, fish, picnic, boat or just experience nature.

Give up? The answer is on the back page.